



ADDRESS BY THE MOST EMINENT AND SUPREME GRAND MASTER

'Distinguished guests and Brother Knights, I begin by offering you all a most hearty welcome to our Chapter of Great Priory here in London today. Many of you have made a considerable effort to be with us and have dealt with travel and transport issues, and I do sincerely hope that the occasion will prove a memorable, trouble free and happy day for you all.

'In 1873 a number of Knights were awarded, for the very first time, the 'honour and dignity' of Knight Grand Cross. These Knights included The Prince of Wales, The Emperor of Germany, the King of Sweden and Norway, along with a number of Dukes, Earls and senior Freemasons. In May 1930 we entered into a concordat with the Great Priorities of Ireland and Scotland to restrict the number of Knights Grand Cross and Knights Commander in our respective Great Priorities at any one time. Today I have been delighted to confer Knight Grand Cross on R.E.Kt. Kessick John Jones who was first appointed P.Gt.A.-de-C. in 1999, and served as Provincial Prior for Kent from 2004-2012. He was appointed a Knight Commander in 2009 and serves on the Grand Master's Council to this day. Similarly, I have appointed as Knights Commander R.E.Kt. Richard Scott, Prov. Prior for Durham, and R.E.Kt. Graeme Hutchinson, Prov. Prior for Derbyshire, both of whom also serve on the Council. These 3 Brother Knights have given, and are still giving, meritorious service to the Order, and I would ask you to join me in wishing them well in their new stations.

'In our congratulations we include all the Brother Knights who received appointments and promotions in Great Priory today. This is your day, your special occasion and I trust you will enjoy your new roles to the full, ever remembering that with rank comes added responsibilities and even more so as Great Priory Officers. We look to you to offer help, encouragement and support to your Preceptories and the Brother Knights therein and never to rest on your laurels.

'As usual I will bring you up to date with the latest news from the St John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital Group. The hospital is living through some of the most difficult times it has ever faced. In spite of that, it continues to deliver its services with care and compassion to our many and varied patients. Gaza is doing better than one might think, in that laser treatment is now available when there is power available and the hospital building there is usable. They are able to treat about 1000 patients a week but that doesn't really dent the waiting list unfortunately. The key issue is the lack of operating theatre disposables which are just not being prioritised to get over the crossing into Gaza.

'Elsewhere the various satellite hospitals are doing well and over all the group is on target to see over 250,000 patients this year. None of this would be possible without the dedicated support the Hospital gets from the Knights Templar Fund of Benevolence, for which the patients, staff and board, remain forever grateful. It is the constancy of your support that allows the Hospital to plan with confidence which is all the more necessary in the current very difficult situation. So, thank you Brother Knights for your continued support.

'I can hardly believe that it has been 9 years since I was installed as your Grand Master, and I wish to thank you for re-electing me for a further term. I do hope that I can fulfil your expectations of me and live up to the ideals of our wonderful Christian Brotherhood. I have learned many lessons over the years and realise more than ever how passionate our members are in ensuring the success of their Preceptories. I believe that the key to the future of all our Companion Orders lies in the strength of the foundations on which they stand. In this ever-changing world we need, more than ever, to ensure that our Craft Lodges and Royal Arch Chapters are in good health and will continue to provide the lifeblood of candidates we need in our Orders.

'Another truth I am more aware of than ever is that our Provincial Priors play an important and vital role in forging good relations between us, the Craft, Royal Arch and other Orders. Today, I reflect on the wise words of the late John Prizeman when he said, 'We are all in this together'. The past 6 months has seen the installations of 2 Provincial Priors, and I am sure you would like to welcome them both on their first Great Priory appearance in this capacity. On February 9th I installed R.E.Kt. David Frederick Bull, in charge of Leicestershire and Rutland, and on 14th March I installed R.E.Kt. Stephen Ranson for Northumberland. Now Brother Knights, let's give them a hearty welcome in their new roles.

'I now turn to welcoming our distinguished guests from Sister Great Priories who have collectively made the proceedings of this afternoon that much more special for us all. It may be better on this occasion to withhold your applause until the end of the list.

From the Great Priory of Ireland, M.E. & S.Kt. Robert G Quigley, G.C.T., Grand Master, and V.E.Kt. Sir Alistair Thompson, Gt.A-de-C.;

From the Great Priory of Scotland, M.E. & R.Kt. Raymond King, G.C.T., Grand Master; R.E. Frater Ronald John Simpson, K.C.T., Great Seneschal; and V.E. Frater Alan Buntain, Grand Secretary;

From the Great Priory of Greece, M.E. & R.Kt. Konstantinos Kalogerakos, G.C.T., Grand Master; M.E. & R.Kt. Andreas Spyropoulos, G.C.T., Past Grand Master; V.E.Kt. Paul Johnston, Great Chancellor and V.E.Kt. Konstantinos Karmalis, Great Vice-Chancellor;

From the Great Priory of Germany, M.E.Kt. Roderick Mackenzie, G.C.T., Grand Master, R.E.Kt Norbert Schoen, Grand Constable, R.E.Kt. John MacKinnon, G.C.T., and R.E.Kt Lt Col. Ian Harper, Grand Chancellor;

From the Great Priory of Finland, R.E.Kt. Jussi Matias, Great Seneschal;

From the Great Priory of Spain, V.H. & R.E.Kt. Keith Halliwell, G.C.T., Great Seneschal;

From the Great Priory of the United Orders of France, M.E. & S.Kt. Michel Manueco, G.C.T., Grand Master; V.E.Kt. Ronald Barham, 1st Great Constable; and R.E.Kt. Jean-Paul Dupinay, K.C.T., Great Chancellor;

From the Great Priory of Italy, M.E. & S.Kt. Alessandro Fisco, G.C.T., Grand Master, and

R.E.Kt. Fabrizio Pisciotta, Grand Constable;

From the Great Priory of Benin, M.E.Kt. Christian Bonzi, G.C.T., Honorary Past Grand Master;

From the Great Priory of The Netherlands, M.E. & S.Kt. Frank Cornelis Johannes Poot, G.C.T., Grand Master; V.H. & R.E.Kt. Herman Lioe-A-Tjam, G.C.T., Great Seneschal; V.E.Kt. Dyonisius Vandijck, Great Marshal; E.Kt. Teun de Bruijn, Deputy Great Marshal; E.Kt. Henk van Tuil, Grand Masters's Bodyguard; and Kt. Martin Tellekamp Booland, Bodyguard;

From the Great Priory of Belgium and its Prefectures in Australia, R.Revd.Kt. Keith Stevens, Assistant Great Prior; and R.Revd.Kt. Thomas Leslie Duffin, Honorary Great Dean;

Order of the Knights Freemasons of Romania, Bro. Vasile Popa, Grand Master, and Bro. Greg Coica, Knight Commander.

Let's show our distinguished guests the warmth of our welcome.

'We now turn to the Brother Knights from overseas within our own Constitution and Heads of other Orders:

From the Far East, E.Kt. George Wing Chung Li;

From South East Asia, R.E.Kt. Brian Shergar, Prov.Prior; E.Kt. Lt Col. Russell Alexander Stuart, CSC, P.Gt.A-de-C.; E.Kt. Capt Dr Julian Brown, P.Gt.A.-de-C.; E.Kt. Christopher Moore, Gt.W. of Reg.; E.Kt. Ratnaswamy Jeyaraj, P.Gt.A.-de-C.; and E.Kt. Ian Philip Ellston;

From Walter Rodwell Wright Preceptory No. 640 (Malta): E.Kt. Leslie Sinclair – a recipient Gt.Her., E.Kt. John David Campbell, P.Gt.A-de-C., E.Kt. Robert Chilvers, Gt.Her., and E.Kt. David James Broxup, P.Gt.Her.;

From Iyanola Preceptory No. 588 (St Lucia): V.E.Kt. Gaspar Llewellyn Gill, SLMM, 2nd Gt.Con.;

From Preceptory of La Valette No. 649 (Malta): E.Kt. Nigel Henry Morris;

From Preceptory of Kolossi No. 684 (Cyprus): E.Kt. Antranik Ashdjian, P.Gt.A.-de-C., and Kt. Kyriacos Andreou

'We are fortunate in enjoying a productive working relationship with many other Masonic Orders in England and Wales, and today from the Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons, we welcome:

E.Kt. Prof Denovan Keith Wilson, P.Gt.Her. – Deputy Grand Master of Mark Master Masons;

E.Kt. Revd Dr Simon Thorn, Gt.Alm. – Grand Prior, Supreme Council 33rd Degree of the Ancient and Accepted Rite; and E.Kt. Dr Giles Shilson, P.Gt.Her., Secretary-General;

R.E.Kt. Kessick Jones, K.C.T. – Grand Master of the Royal and Select Masters;

R.E.Kt. Thomas Firth Jackson, K.C.T. – Grand Master of the Order of the Allied Masonic Degrees;

R.E.Kt. Andrew Sweeney, K.C.T. – Grand Supreme Ruler of the Order of the Secret Monitor;

R.E.Kt. Christopher Maiden, K.C.T. – Grand High Priest of the Holy Royal Arch Knight Templar Priests and Order of Holy Wisdom;

R.E.Kt. Dr Vivian Thomas, JP, K.C.T. – Grand Master of the Grand Priory of the Knights Beneficent of the Holy City;

E.Kt. Anthony Llewellyn, P.Gt.Her. – Supreme Magus of the Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia;

Let's express our appreciation for the attendance of all these Brother Knights. 'Across our Preceptories, particularly those that predate Great Priory, variations to our ceremonies exist, such as the Anterior Address and Vigil readings; but, with a few exceptions, our core ceremony should remain consistent across the country. It was therefore very pleasing that, earlier this year, on 13 January, 87 Knights representing every Province in England and Wales, as well as one who had travelled all the way from South-East Asia, attended the King Edward VII Preceptory of Improvement Marshals meeting, to receive a detailed demonstration and explanation of our beautiful ceremony. As well as the meeting in January, the team of the KEVII Pol has now provided demonstrations to nine Provinces over the two years with a tenth visit lined up for next month.

'As a follow up to these demonstrations, the Pol has produced a handbook, which has been circulated to all Provinces earlier this month for onward distribution to their Preceptory Marshals. This is an excellent resource for all those who are keen to see our ceremonies delivered in an enthusiastic yet reverential manner, and I am grateful to the Great Marshal and all those involved over the last two years for their hard work. This handbook will be of particular use to those who wish to take the Tests of Marshals and Preceptor, and I am pleased to congratulate E.Kt Brian Connor, of the Provinces of Lincolnshire and Worcestershire, who passed his test last month. I will be pleased to present him with his certificate.

'Before we close, I would like to express my personal gratitude to the Great Vice-Chancellor and the staff at the Chancery for all they do to ensure the smooth running of the Order and this meeting in particular. Similarly to the Great Marshal and his Deputies for the exemplary ceremonial we have enjoyed today, and a special 'thank you' to the Grand Master's Bodyguard, who in my experience, has always set the standard for meetings of Great Priory. You will have noticed that the Commander of the Body Guard changed today, the outgoing Commander, E.Kt. Adam Lancashire is very soon to be installed as Provincial Prior for Derbyshire, and I thank him for all he has done in his role as Deputy Commander and latterly as Commander in maintaining the traditions and standards of this incredible band of Knights.

'I also wish to thank E.Kt. John Vazquez and those at Freemasons' Hall for all their support and for making these magnificent facilities available to us. Today has seen a very important and significant meeting for us, and I feel more than ever that we are highly privileged in being members of this great Order, drawing its inspiration from the Christian Religion and the faithful practice of Christian virtues. It extends to us the privilege of sharing in its priceless heritage of the past, as defenders of the faith.

'Thank you Brother Knights, for your attendance today, and I look forward to seeing you all again at our Malta Great Priory in November.